

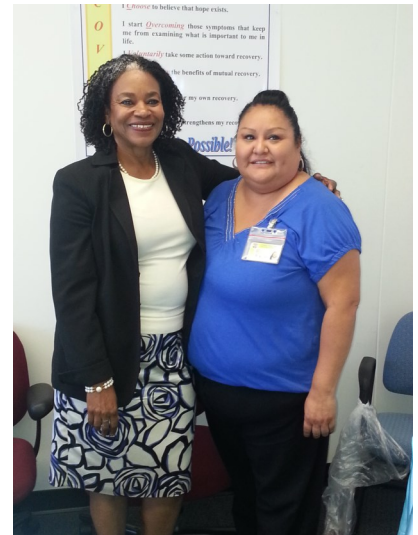


# TAY System of Care Bureau Newsletter

## Sandra D. Thomas' Retirement from TAY-SOC

On July 31, 2013, Sandra D. Thomas, L.C.S.W., the founding Deputy Director of the TAY System of Care Bureau retired after more than 37 years of County Service. Through her vision and under her leadership the TAY-SOC achieved much success in ensuring delivery of mental health services and supports to highly vulnerable and at-risk populations. Her notable career achievements include: the development of the Child Welfare Division; expansion of the Juvenile Justice Division's mental health services and supports programs, ensuring DMH compliance with the Department of Justice Agreement; creation of the TAY Division; and ensuring the availability of community-based mental health services to ethnically and culturally diverse populations served by directly-operated and contracted providers in Service-Area 6. On July 27, 2013 a celebration of her County service was hosted by the TAYSOC Bureau, DMH Executive Management Team, and her family members at the California African-American Museum in Exposition Park. Over a hundred persons attended, including friends, colleagues, community agencies, constituents, and politicians. The inspiration-themed event was highlighted by live music and songs; testimonials from family, friends, and colleagues; and a special video message from DMH Director, Marvin Southard. Sandra was presented with a scroll in recognition of her County service signed by all members of the Board of Supervisors. In her final comments to the guests, Sandra reflected upon her career, colleagues, lifelong friendships, supportive extended family, and the important role that her faith has contributed to her success and plans for her future.

Source: Terri Boykins



*Executive Management Team*

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## SPOTLIGHT ON: Juvenile Justice Mental Health Programs in the Los Angeles County Probation Camps



*“Overall, there has been an increase in the quantity and quality of mental health services .” -*

Karen Streich, PhD

In 2006-07, the Mental Health Service Act funding allowed the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to enhance services to youth in the eighteen Probation camps, including the placement of clinicians throughout the camp system. As a further benefit, in October 2008, the County of Los Angeles entered into a Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) for the Probation Camps, with the terms and conditions of the Agreement accelerating the development of a full continuum of mental health services to youth housed in the Probation camps.

Under the leadership of Karen Streich, PhD, Mental Health Clinical District Chief, the Probation Camps provide an array of mental health services with staff available 7 days per week, including evenings and holidays. Probation officers and DMH clinical staff co-facilitate an array of Evidence Based Interventions, as well as therapy groups, to address co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Psychiatric services are also available at camps to serve youth prescribed psychotropic medications. Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings are held regularly, with initial and transitional MDTs for all youth entering and exiting camps; the primary goal to reduce recidivism and increase pro-social skills and community adjustment.

Overall, there has been an increase in the quantity and quality of mental health services. There is full Quality Assurance oversight, as well as a thorough implementation of an Electronic Medical-Mental Health Record. With respect to the provisions of the Settlement Agreement that relate to mental health services, all have been fully satisfied and are no longer in compliance monitoring. A handful of provisions in which DMH has a secondary role, are in the process of completing compliance monitoring. It is anticipated that the DOJ Settlement Agreement for Probation Camps will be completed by the end of December 2014.

### Probation Camp Data (2013)

Number of Probation Camps	13
Number of Youth sent to Probation Camps	1,946
Number of Youth provided with Mental Health Services at Probation Camps	1,712
DMH Staff Delivering Services at Probation Camps	120

Source: Karen Streich and Gail Blesi

*“Hopefully,  
I will get rich  
and buy you  
some  
Ferraris!” -  
A.F.*

*“With such  
collaboration and  
team work integrated  
mental health  
services in the  
community can take  
on a whole village in  
providing the  
necessary services.” -*

Dr. Hanumantha  
Damerla

## Client Success Story

*(Adapted from a letter by AF)*

First, I would like to thank Joaquin and Christi . . . it's been a long year but working with you guys keep me positive and motivated to keep pushing towards success. At times, it was difficult going to meetings and interviews. Through all of my ups and downs, you and Christi always supported me – even when I was wrong and because of that I keep trying to do my best, because I knew I had people who really care about my future. And for that I thank you guys. Hopefully I will get rich and buy you some Ferraris!



## DR. HANUMANTHA DAMERLA RECEIVES LA COUNTY STARS! AWARD



Dr. Hanumantha (Hanu) Damerla, M.D. Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrist, currently serving as Medical Director for Juvenile Justice Camps and Dorothy Kirby Center, was awarded the LA County Special Talents for Achieving Remarkable Service (STARS!) award. The STARS! is the countywide employee recognition program, replacing the former Employee of the Month program. Dr. Damerla was awarded the STARS! award in the category of Service Excellence and Organizational Effectiveness at the Los

Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2014. Dr. Damerla was recognized for his leadership efforts and contribution to the department's compliance with the Department of Justice Agreement by improving the quality of effective juvenile rehabilitation and reducing stigma barriers, through implementing family engagement, education, and staff-related trainings. After being awarded, Dr. Damerla stated “I didn't know I was nominated. I am grateful and touched. Mental health services have come a long way.” Dr. Damerla recognized the significant contributions he received from TAY SOC Bureau, stating “with such collaboration and team work” integrated mental health services in the community can take on a “whole village” in providing the necessary services. Dr. Damerla aspires to continue his hard work, have a positive attitude, and dedicate himself to public service, as he feels that they are key attributes to reaching his goals.

Adapted Source: Kimberli Washington, Public Information Office.

## Staff Feature: Belen Fuller, LCSW Program Head - TAY Division

### What interested you into the Mental Health field?

I viewed mental health as an opportunity for me to contribute to my community in a meaningful way. I feel a sense of gratitude and personal fulfillment by providing mental health



services to people in my own backyard. This sense of purpose evolved from growing up in a disadvantaged, diverse community, where receiving any type of counseling was perceived negatively. Counseling and therapy was not viewed as a viable option for addressing issues. I took an active role when I decided to major in Social Work to broaden my interest in mental health.

**What is your role in the program?** I am the Program Head for the Transition Age Youth (TAY) Division. My role is to advocate, support, and enhance mental health services for TAY countywide.

**What goal(s) would you like to accomplish?** I am working to close service gaps to Transition Age Youth by outreaching and engaging to underrepresented cultural/ethnic groups. I am striving to equip my staff with the resources necessary to better engage youth in the community. I am collaborating with the providers to improve service delivery to youth.

**What do you do to de-stress/decompress?** I strongly believe in self-care to be productive with my work. I take walks, listen to music, and always have a positive outlook on life.

*"I feel a sense of gratitude and personal fulfillment by providing mental health services to people in my own backyard." - Belen Fuller*

## TAY Conference 2013

On Wednesday, May 29, 2013, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) hosted its second Transition Age Youth (TAY) Conference, *Promoting Hope, Wellness and Self-Sufficiency: One Success at a Time*, at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles. The all-day conference, funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), attracted about 300 attendees.

LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, D.S.W., welcomed the audience to the conference and had a message specifically for TAY attendees. "What we need from



you is to be heroes...I'm urging you to harness your idealism, courage and creativity to be heroes today," said Dr. Southard. He asked the adolescents and young adults to reach out and help others who are faced with addiction, and to show them the way to recovery.

Adapted Source: Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, Public Information Office

*"He asked the adolescents and young adults to reach out and help others who are faced with addiction, and to show them the way to recovery."*



## TRANSITION AGE YOUTH SYSTEM OF CARE LEADERSHIP

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## Announcements

### Suicide Prevention

The Partners in Suicide Prevention (PSP) Team for Children, Transition Age Youth (TAY), Adults, and Older Adults is funded by the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA). This program is designed to increase public awareness of suicide and reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health and substance abuse services.

Trainings have been provided in an array of settings including: Los Angeles County departments, colleges, shelters, faith based communities, community mental health agencies and direct service providers. Our goal is to average 16 trainings per month.

For additional information or trainings, please contact Karon Austin, TAY Division, at 213-351-7788 or William Barreto, TAY Division, at 213-351-7797.

### Anti-Stigma and Discrimination

The Countywide Anti-Stigma and Discrimination (ASD) Team is a Prevention and Early Intervention Program. Its mission is to increase public awareness, social acceptance, and inclusion of people with mental health challenges. ASD consists of one hour group sessions with dialogue and activity to encourage access to mental health services.

### TAY Mobile Resource Library

The mobile library provides information regarding mental health, homeless shelters, health services, crisis counseling, alcohol and drug counseling, GED preparation, social skills training, job readiness and job placement services. The mobile library can be set up in directly operated and community agencies on a rotation basis.

For additional information on ASD trainings and the mobile library please contact Doralee Bridges, TAY Division, at 213-351-5225.

## Relocation of Service Area 6 Administration

The Service Area 6 Administration team, under the leadership of District Chief Yolanda Whittington, has re-located to DMH Headquarters, 550 S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles. If you would like to contact SA-6 Administration Team, please call Lisa Grate, Secretary, at (213) 738-4859.